

THOUGHTS
ON
INFANT BAPTISM.

SECOND EDITION, REVISED.

MONTREAL: W. DRYSDALE & CO.

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The following Thoughts are for the most part selected and abridged from the works of authors who have written on the subject of Christian Baptism. They are intended for the use of persons who have neither the time nor the opportunity to enter upon an extensive course of reading on this important subject.

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THE TWO BAPTISMS.

THE Church of God on earth is in a state of training to join the Church triumphant above; and there are two important lessons to learn, and to be kept constantly in view, namely: the great sacrifice by which redemption is completed, and the great work by which it is communicated; or, the work of Christ *for us*, and the work of the Spirit *in us*. These being the prominent features of the glorious scheme, which originated in the eternal love of God to man, it has pleased the Author of salvation to appoint two standing ordinances, for the express purpose of representing those unspeakable blessings. These ordinances are coeval with the organization of the Church; and though, like the Church itself, they have changed their external form and outward administration, their design has always been the same, and their use in the Church has been continued by the authority of a divine command, which has never been revoked.

In the Old Testament state of the church, these ordinances were called, *Circumcision* and the *Passover*: in the New Testament state of the church, they are called *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*. The first,—*Baptism*, is our present subject. It is introduced into the New Testament without any explanation whatever as to the mode. This was not necessary as the religious and symbolic import of baptism was well known and understood. Under the Old Covenant it was a purification for sin, Numbers xix. It is modified in the New Covenant, and the ashes of an heifer whereon sin was typically laid, are no longer to be mixed with the water of separation from the world of sin. The one sacrifice of Jesus Christ, on whom sin was laid, renders all other sacrifices superfluous, and as there is but one sacrifice, there is also but one baptism, one single typical

washing, and the recipient is taught to seek, or it may be has already obtained that spiritual purification of the soul from the Lord, of which the purification by water of the body is the type.

When the New Testament is searched for its teachings on the doctrine of Baptism, we meet with the first mention of this religious ceremony in the third chapter of St. Matthew, where the nature and object of baptism is declared: "I indeed baptize you with water unto *repentance*; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the *Holy Spirit*, and with fire." This teaches us clearly that there are, as regards the church of God, *two baptisms*,—that by man unto repentance, or admission into the visible church, the called,—the other, by the Lord with the Holy Spirit unto salvation, or admission into the invisible church, the chosen.

This distinction of the two baptisms is confirmed by the example of Jesus Christ himself, who commenced his ministry by the reception of a double baptism; first, that of water, afterwards that of the Holy Spirit,—the symbol before the reality, Matt. iii. 16; and, immediately before His ascension, when He was assembled with His Apostles, He commanded them to wait at Jerusalem for the fulfilment of the promise of the Father. This promise consisted in the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In the words which He uses, and from which there can be no appeal, the two baptisms are distinctly asserted, "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit, not many days hence," Acts i. 5. This first positive teaching of Scripture on the subject of baptism is also the last which we meet with in its pages. The Apostle Peter distinctly states that there are two baptisms, of which one is the figure of the other, and that the second, whose nature is spiritual, is infinitely superior to the first. "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ," 1 Peter iii. 21. Thus, the New Testament commences and finishes its teachings upon baptism, by a division so simple,

and yet fundamental—a baptism of water and a baptism of the Holy Spirit,—the two being distinguished from each other as the figure and the reality.

But let us look at those passages of Scripture which refer to baptism, and in which we find the distinction we have just recognised, for if we do not carefully mark this distinction, we are in danger of confounding the two baptisms, and of applying to the baptism of water what is said of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, or to the latter what is declared of the former. If we fail to observe this essential difference, a confusion of ideas naturally arises, and the way opened to breed dangerous heresies. The baptismal regeneration which the Roman, the Greek, and some Protestant Churches teach, has its source in this want of distinction. Baptismal regeneration is the doctrine which teaches that the spiritual change, designated in Scripture by the term regeneration, is always attendant upon and effected by the rite of water baptism, and that every person who has not received the baptism of water, however deep or mature his repentance and faith may be, is still unregenerate. It has been said, "the Bible teaches that baptism saves," and this has been said with truth, but then many have failed to distinguish that in such passages, the Bible had reference to the baptism of the Holy Spirit only, without the reception of which, none can enter the invisible Church of God. Others, the Valentineans and Quakers, have gone to the opposite extreme, and suppressed the baptism of water, and acknowledge only the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Others receive into fellowship those only who make a profession of faith, and refuse to baptize the children of believers. They assert that a man must be a believer, that is, born again, before the baptism of water. This reverses the Scripture order of the two baptisms; but worse than this, it implies that the baptizer has power to distinguish between a true and a false profession of faith. As, however, the "Son of Man" alone has power to do this, Matt. xiii.,—the theory is a false one. They have also attempted to fix the external form of the baptism of water, by applying to it declarations, which belong to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The examination of a few texts will shew

this. These texts are addressed to brethren and saints, and speak of their intimate union with Christ as the result of their baptism, which baptism is represented under four figures:

"How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are *buried with Him by baptism into death*; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life: for if we have been *planted together in the likeness of his death*, we shall be also *in the likeness of his resurrection*," Rom. vi, 2-5.

"Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have *put on Christ*," Gal. iii. 26, 27.

"In whom also ye are circumcised with the *circumcision made without hands*, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God," Col. ii. 11, 12.

In these passages, is reference made to the baptism of water, or to the baptism of the Holy Spirit? The Apostle certainly refers here to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. If reference be to a baptism of water, then the baptism of water would save. But St. Paul says, that this death with Christ is the work of the Spirit; and that it is a constant work, for we must die daily with Christ, Rom. viii. 9, 10, 11. The Apostle depicts this baptism under four figures: a Burial, a Planting, a Garment, and a Circumcision. It is extremely arbitrary to select one of these figures, "a Burial," to the rejection of the others, and materialize the ordinance by the ceremony of Immersion, and say that it represents the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. It is inconsistent, for if water baptism unites us so intimately to Christ as to secure to us the benefits of His death and of His resurrection, then it would do for us outwardly, all that the Holy Spirit can do in our hearts; it supersedes the higher baptism of the Holy Spirit. In the Epistle to the Ephesians (iv. 5), St. Paul declares that there is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." Which is this one

baptism? Even before looking at the context, the question can be answered. For let it be remembered, that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is infinitely superior to that of water; that as St. Peter states it, the one "saves us," while the other only "puts away the filth of the flesh;" and when an Apostle speaks of a baptism in exalted terms, it can be only baptism of the highest character; that which in a true sense is emphatically baptism, the only true and effective one, since the other is only its shadow, its figure, the preparation for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

But let us look at the context and we shall find this view confirmed. In verses 3, 4, the Apostle urges the Ephesians, "to keep among themselves the Unity of the Spirit." To this end he reminds them, that there is for them but "one body, one spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God." Certainly it is not the baptism of water which causes the unity of the redeemed with the spiritual body of Christ. A glance at the Churches and the sects of Christianity shews that it is not. If any doubt on this matter remain, the language of St. Paul should, one would think, promptly remove it. He says, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body," 1 Cor. xii. 13. Here it is seen to be the baptism of the Spirit that makes us one body. There is another class of passages where there is mention of baptism made in such a manner as to confound apparently the water and the Spirit, the sign and the thing signified. We group the passages together in order that they may explain each other. "But ye are washed.....in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God," 1 Cor. vi. 11. "Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that he might sanctify and *cleanse* it with the *Washing of Water by the Word*, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish, Eph. v. 25, 26, 27. "God our Saviour has *saved us*, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy, by the *Washing of regeneration* and renewing of the Holy Spirit; which He shed on us abundantly," Titus iii, 4, 5, 6.

Let us take the most difficult passage, where it is said that Jesus Christ himself has cleansed His Church with the baptism of water. This appears to be a very extraordinary assertion; but the Apostle is here speaking of the invisible Church. If it is by the baptism of water the Church is cleansed and sanctified, then, from the thief upon the cross, to the present moment, there are thousands of the elect who have died without receiving water baptism; so, that Christ has not cleansed in the baptism of water his whole Church, but only a portion of it. The solution of this difficulty, however, is very simple; it is, that this baptism, or washing of water is plainly a figure. It has a spiritual sense. It is the word of God which has operated this washing, and not the hand of man; and this the more because Jesus Christ himself never baptized with water, John iv. 2. If "Christ has cleansed the Church with the washing of water by the Word, the meaning is that the Church was cleansed or baptised by the Saviour himself, not in water, but by the Word. "Now ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you," John xv. 3. It is the same idea which we find in the other two passages: "washed by the Spirit;" "saved by the washing of regeneration." We would notice, also, the passage, "eight persons were saved by water. The like figure, whereunto, even baptism doth also now save us," 1 Peter iii. 20, 21. There is here something much stronger in favour of water baptism than in the passages quoted from St. Paul, but the Apostle Peter has taken care to warn us that it is in "figure" only that the baptism of water saves; and in order to guard well against misconception here, and that it may be clearly understood that it is not the figure, but that which is figured, which saves; he adds this explanation, "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh," but what no baptism in water could possibly give, "the answer of a good conscience towards God," and this as the effect of the "resurrection of Jesus Christ." The distinction between the two baptisms, of water and of the Spirit, casts much light on the passage where baptism is not expressly mentioned, but where allusion is evidently made to it; "except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into

the kingdom of God," John iii. 5. Nicodemus, to whom our Lord addressed these words, was familiar with the symbolical application of water, and the use of this symbol was therefore well fitted to show that the thing intended was no other than a spiritual purification by the operation of the Holy Spirit.

This double baptism of water and of the Holy Spirit, appears to have been alluded to by the Prophets, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean; from all your filthiness will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you," Ezek. xxxvi. 25-27. Another passage upon which the doctrine of two baptisms throws light, and from which alone a satisfactory solution is obtained, is the following, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned," Mark xvi. 15. Here are two conditions of salvation to those able to hear—saving faith and spiritual baptism; "but he that believeth not," or who has not this inner faith of the heart, "shall be condemned." It is certain that he who refuses, or neglects the Gospel, is not baptized with the Holy Spirit, or in other words, is in a state of condemnation.. Let a baptism of water only be seen in the above passage, and it will be impossible to escape the conclusion that the baptism of water, is necessary to salvation. If, on the contrary, we recall the important distinction first made by John the Baptist, and affirmed afterwards by our Saviour and His Apostles, and recognise here the baptism of the Holy Spirit, then the passage becomes perfectly clear, and its sense is in accordance with the other teaching of Scripture on the subject. "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit." But here we shall be met with the objection that in the passage of Mark xvi. 16. the very same baptism is referred to as in Matt. xxviii. 19-20, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you;" where evident reference is made to a baptism with water.

Some persons confound these two texts, and "he that be-

lieveth" of St. Mark is taken to fill up what is felt to be a deficiency in St. Matthew, because belief or faith is not mentioned in the commission to disciple the nations. But this cannot be admitted. The passage in St. Matt. is not deficient, it speaks of the Church on earth and the mode of reception into it, namely, by baptising, and then teaching; that in St. Mark is not a commission to baptize—the Apostles were to preach the Gospel, and there their authority ended. It is a question of salvation or condemnation, and for salvation, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is imperative. But we are not reduced to a mere probability; we have in favour of our opinion, Scripture certainty. The narrative of the two Gospels is completed by the Acts of the Apostles, and there we learn that our Saviour, in giving His last charge to His disciples, spoke to them of two baptisms, "John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit," Acts i. 5.

The baptism of the death of Christ was the consequence and the complement of the baptism of water; sacrifice was wanting as an integral part of the new baptism, introduced by the Gospel; Jesus Christ himself completed this baptism, Heb. chap. ix. and x. "He came by water and blood, not by water only, but by water and blood," 1 John v. 6. He began His ministry by water, and he ended it by blood. Henceforth water baptism will remind us of the beginning of His work, of the necessity on our part of repentance, and the need of remission of sins; while the Holy Supper helps us to remember the end of His work, its accomplishment through His blood poured out. Baptism is a look cast at the future; the Supper, a remembrance of the past.



BAPTISM ON PROFESSION.

Upon a right understanding of the words, *Repent, Believe, Faith*, much depends. They do not always mean the same thing in Scripture. It is the relation held by water baptism to these words, which is so differently understood, and is the cause of so much contention. To arrive at the true meaning, the context must be carefully considered.

Repentance is sometimes taken for that regret which ariseth in a person after having done something that he ought not to have done. When Judas saw that Christ was condemned, he repented of what he had done, Matt. xxvii. 3. But this repentance ariseth from a fear of punishment denounced against sin, and is not accompanied with hatred of sin; as when a malefactor suffers for his crimes, he reflects upon his actions with sorrow, but this sorrow is quite compatible with a love of sin. He may be sorry for his sins as they have exposed him to punishment, and yet not be grieved that thereby he has offended God. Felix trembled at Paul's reasoning, being convicted in his mind; but he did not forsake his sins. The word also signifies that repentance wrought in the soul by the Spirit of God, whereby a sinner is made to see, and made sensible of his sin, is grieved and humbled before God on account of it, not so much for the punishment to which sin has made him liable, as that thereby God is dishonoured and offended, his laws violated, and the sinner's own soul polluted. This grief arises from love to God, and is accompanied by a hatred of sin. This is true repentance. "Repent ye for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance," Matt. iii. 2, 8. "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death," 2 Cor. vii. 10.

Belief signifies to give credit to anything. "Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt, and Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not," Gen. xlv. 26. To assent barely to Gospel truths. "Then Simon Magus himself

believed also," Acts viii. 13. *To receive, depend and rely* upon Christ for life and salvation. But as many as received Him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," John i. 12, 13. "For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth," Rom. x. 4. "*To be fully persuaded,*" John vi. 69. "*To expect or hope for,*" Psal. xxvii. 13. "*To put confidence in,*" 2 Chron. xx. 20. "*To know,*" John xvii. 21, Jam. ii. 19.

There are as many definitions of the word *Faith*. It is a dependence on the veracity of another—this trust is called faith, because it relies upon the truth of a promise; and one is said to keep his faith inviolate when he performs the promise that another relied on. Faith in the propriety of its expression is an assent on account of the veracity of the speaker. Faith is generally distinguished into four kinds, namely:—historical, temporary, the faith of miracles, and justifying or saving faith.

Historical faith is a speculative knowledge of, and bare assent to the truths as they are revealed in the Scriptures; it is that external assent people often give to the preaching of the Gospel, and frequently is expressive of a simple confidence in the testimony of another. "Faith, if it have not works is dead. Ye see how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only," (Jam. ii. 17, 24), that is, not a mere profession of faith, or a bare assent to the truth, without good works, which proceed from faith, and shew it to be of the right kind. This kind of faith the devils themselves have. "Thou believest that there is one God, the devils also believe and tremble," Jam. ii. 19. "When Jesus was in Jerusalem many believed in His name, but Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because *He* knew all men," John ii. 23, 24. His disciples believed on Him at Cana, ver. 11, but they were far from having the true faith: and it is not until three years later, (verse 22), they believed unto salvation. This explains also why, "When many had believed on Him," Jesus said unto those Jews which believed, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples

indeed," John viii. 31, 32. Again, we are told that "many believed on him but did not confess him, for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."

Temporary faith, see the parable of the sower, Mat. xiii. 19, 22; "When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful."

The faith of Miracles, of which our Saviour and the Apostle Paul speak, Mat. xvii. 20: 1 Cor. xiii. 2; and on which the change of heart does not depend.

Justifying faith is a saving grace wrought in the soul by the Spirit of God, whereby we receive Christ, as He is revealed in the Gospel, and rely upon Him and His righteousness alone. This faith begets a sincere obedience in the life and conversation. It is called the "substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," Heb. xi. 1. This grace is the special gift of God, "By grace ye are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God," Eph. ii. 8.

On the kingdom of Heaven alluded to in the preceding passages we remark that what St. Matthew calls the kingdom of Heaven, is styled by St. Mark and St. Luke, the kingdom of God. Both phrases have the same meaning; they contain an allusion to the ancient predictions, respecting the reign of the Messiah. Daniel says, "In the days of these kings shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, chap. ii. 44. Again, speaking of "one like unto the Son of Man," he says, "there was given him dominion, glory, and a kingdom that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him," chap. vii. 14. To the same effect are numerous predictions of the other prophets. The kingdom thus

foretold, can be none other than the visible kingdom of Christ or the Gospel Church, which was to be established among all nations.

We will now consider what was the belief professed by those multitudes who received water baptism. We turn to Matt. iii. 11, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance." At the preaching of John the Baptist, Jerusalem, Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, believed his report and came to him to be baptized. Was their belief saving belief?—much thought is not needed to enable one to answer with entire confidence, No; the majority of them belonged to the first three classes in the "parable of the sower,"—they were not all true believers. Had they been so, the Lord would not have called them a little later, a perverse and adulterous generation. He would not have been crucified by this very people of Jerusalem; and three years after the death of the Forerunner, the first Christian Church would not have been composed of only a handful of disciples gathered in an upper chamber. The result shows beyond all cavil that the baptism of water by John was not a baptism of true believers; and if it was not so then, it never became so afterwards. The Gospel tells us they were persons who repented or rather professed repentance; who confessed their sins, in prospect of the immediate coming of the Messiah. This confession did not enter into the details of private life, for the ministry of John was not specially designed for this end. It was on the part of those coming to be baptized, a general confession of impurity, and of the need which man has to be washed from his sins by Divine Mercy. Such a confession is still obtained at the present day from the mass of men. It is an important confession,—a basis for the reception of the true faith, but nevertheless, not all who make it are believers, in the spiritual sense of the term; those whom John baptized were not more enlightened than the mass of nominal Christians of the present day. They were a people of the called, but the result shewed they were not all chosen.

It is not the province of man to judge, or demand of the candidate, saving faith, for that is the office of Jesus Christ

alone; but in the case of adults, it is required that their outward conduct should conform to their profession, giving good hope of their conversion, and in the case of children, that they should be "trained up" in the way they should go, Prov. xxii. 6. The Church on earth, or the visible Church, is composed of the called as well as of the chosen. No error is more common than for man to pass judgment on matters relating to the invisible Church, an error which arises for the most part from the confusion of the two baptisms.

In the case of Jesus who presented himself to be baptized, there can be no plea of a baptism before or after justifying faith; for Jesus having never sinned, it could not be applied to Him as the baptism of repentance. His baptism, like his circumcision and observance of the passover, was a "righteousness" which it became Him to fulfil. How then did it apply? He was a prophet divinely inspired, as all prophets were. Since He was Creator and Proprietor of the universe, He was already King; and since He was also to execute the office of a Priest under the law, He must be legally qualified. In the case of a Priest, there must be an external purification with water, Ex. xl. 31, and an anointing with oil, (Ex. xxx. 30), to signify the gift of the Holy Spirit. This last was fulfilled by the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus, the thing signified by the oil. But even in his baptism he imparts to his disciples the lesson that the baptism of water preceded the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Let no attempt be made, therefore, to lessen the value of this instruction, by claiming that the Spirit of God is here put to signify the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, for these were not known before the day of Pentecost. This was the same Spirit which led Jesus into the wilderness, it was not the gifts that led Him away, but the divine influence of the Spirit. The Spirit of truth, the Comforter, does not merely consist in any of His external manifestations, namely, extraordinary gifts; but in that spirit which receives every man who believes, John iii. 5, 8, 11, 29. "If any man have not this Spirit of Christ, he is none of His," Rom. viii. 9. This is the Spirit which is shed abroad in our hearts, with which we are sealed, which is the earnest of our

redemption." "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit." This same Spirit which makes the true believer, was undoubtedly with Jesus from the beginning; but after the baptism of water, he received it in an official manner, as Priest. The baptism of John is followed by the baptism of Jesus Christ, administered through His disciples, but it is the same baptism of the multitude into the visible Church; "the field of wheat and tares;" of a people who have not saving faith, but are only awakened, and give an external adherence to the preaching of the Gospel. John the Baptist preached very severely to them, calling them a "generation of vipers;" but for all that, it is not seen that in a single instance he had refused the ordinance to any who presented themselves. The Lord only can separate the wheat from the chaff. Several of those disciples after having followed the Lord for a time, grew cold and abandoned Him; "From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him," John vi. 66. "Then said Jesus to those Jews who believed on him, "If ye *continue* in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed."

We thus reach the close of our Lord's ministry, without meeting in the Gospel with any other baptism than that of profession, of those who listened to the preaching of John. The avowed enemies of the Lord—the Pharisees, and Lawyers, were not baptized, and yet they were not excluded, they voluntarily excluded themselves; "They rejected the counsel of God against themselves," Luke vii. 30. The multitudes who received baptism were well disposed people who felt their religious wants, otherwise they would not have applied for baptism. At the first baptism performed after the day of Pentecost, the Apostles baptized three thousand at one time, and in a single afternoon, Acts ii. 41. Peter preached to them, and the hearts of these people were moved, and they asked what they should do, for they had as yet, no knowledge of the Gospel, except what they had just heard. The Apostle urges them to be baptized, not because they had believed, and possessed the faith that saves, for on the contrary, Peter told them, "Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift

of the Holy Spirit." He places the remission of sins, or what comes to the same, saving faith, after water baptism, and puts before this only the desire of pardon. The order of the Apostle runs thus: first, repent, that is desire to do better; secondly, be baptized; and, thirdly, strive to obtain the remission of your sins, by believing, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This is all contained in verse 38; and the place assigned by the Apostle to the baptism of water in the work of regeneration is placed between external assent and saving faith, as intermediary, in passing from one to the other. The narrative of this first baptism after the day of Pentecost is given in so detailed and complete a manner, that we arrive at conclusions more clear than those derived from subsequent and less circumstantial narrations of baptism. The text imparts additional light upon the religious character of those three thousand, by telling us, ver. 41, that "all who received his word gladly" were baptized. The subjects of the baptism of the Apostles are thus very clearly determined, for Scripture makes use of an expression explained by Jesus Christ Himself at length, which leaves no room for doubt. In Matt. xiii. He describes, under the parable of the sower, all who listen to the word; and arranges them in classes: First, we must distinguish those who listen to the word from those who do not listen to it, either from indifference or from aversion. Those who listen are those who feel themselves drawn by the preaching of the Gospel, and who receive it favourably;—these are evidently the three thousand baptized of our text, "who gladly received the word," which Peter had addressed to them. Now, the Saviour says amongst those who listen to the word, there are some who "receive it," as seed cast by the way-side; others "hear the word and receive it with joy," similar to the three thousand; others receive the word among thorns; others, finally, receive the word into good ground,—an accurate description of the visible Church. The three thousand have then received a baptism of calling, but not a baptism of conversion, for that is a baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Peter reproaches this hardened multitude with having crucified the Lord. Many are moved, and listen with compunction to his preaching, and immediately, without examination or individual confession, the Apostles baptized them. Their sincerity is not put in question, for it is sufficiently proved from the fact that they offer themselves for baptism. The act of the ceremony is of itself a confession of sin and a repentance, expressed in symbolical language. More powerful than words, he who presents himself for water baptism, testifies sufficiently by this act to his impurity; so that these three thousand are added, not to the invisible Church, but simply to the number of the disciples, verse 41. Such only as believe unto salvation were added to the Church, by the Lord, and not by man, verse 47, for the Church of God being the body of Christ, the fellowship of those who are possessors of life eternal, it is evident that water baptism cannot be the gate of admission into it. "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body."

The next case of baptism that occurs is that of the Samaritans, Acts viii. Philip preached Christ to the people of the City of Samaria; they believed Philip and were baptized. The nature of their belief may be judged from the fact that Simon Magus also believed, and was baptized; nevertheless he had not repented, "his heart was not right in the sight of God, and he had neither part nor lot in this matter," verses 20, 23. These persons had been baptized for some time, and yet not one of them had received the Holy Spirit; "For as yet he was fallen on none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus," verse 16.

In the baptism of the Eunuch, we meet with a case which has the appearance of a baptism of water after saving faith, but it really comes under the rule of baptism on profession. First, the entire 37th verse, which contains this text, "and Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," is wanting in all the old and best manuscripts without exception. In the small number of modern manu-

scripts where it is found, the passage is full of variations, which shew plainly that it is a late addition made to the text by the Fathers, who did not like to see the Eunuch baptised without making a confession of faith. All the revisers of the Canon are unanimous in rejecting this passage as spurious, which is certainly not inspired. Now the passage, were it only doubtful, is, by this very fact, not such as might serve for a basis upon which to build a doctrine in opposition to the rest of the Bible. But, notwithstanding, if it is insisted to retain the spurious verse in the Word of God, it is far from sufficient to prove a baptism of water after saving faith, for Scripture takes the word *believe* in more acceptations than one. Thus in the same chapter, the Eunuch believes, so also does Simon Magus believe, both from Philip's preaching; exactly illustrating the parable of the sower, Matt. xiii. What the faith of Simon Magus was, we know, and unless Philip had suddenly changed his practice, we know he did not exact from the Eunuch a different confession from Simon Magus; nor from the Samaritans, none of whom had received the Holy Spirit till some time after their baptism of water. The Eunuch is the first heathen baptized under the Gospel, it is therefore not extraordinary that a more detailed account of this baptism should be given us.

This baptism is followed by the more public one, namely, that of Cornelius, in which we see the Gentiles formally and officially received as disciples; but how strong was the prejudice against them! The whole chapter (Acts x.) is taken up in convincing Peter that God had accepted the heathen. First, a special revelation teaches him that earnest and sincere pagans are not defiled; then another revelation of the Spirit to make him accept the invitation, and follow the three messengers, doubting nothing; finally, while Peter addresses them, "the Holy Spirit fell on all them which heard the word." Peter is convinced, since here was a certainty of their conversion, and no mere profession. In this case, there is an undoubted exception to the general rule; but the exception has its motive clear and strong, and therefore only confirms

the rule; for it was the great event that God had "also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life," Acts xv. 8. After this precedent, the baptism of water was granted them without hesitation, as being a public act of renouncing paganism and professing to seek in Christ the remission of sins. The baptisms which follow in the narrative of the Acts, are all of the same character. First, comes that of St. Paul, Acts ix. Ananias is sent to him that he might receive his sight, verse 12. Immediately on receiving his sight, he arose and was baptized," verse 18. The passage, "wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord," (Acts xx. 10), typifies the application of our Lord's work to the soul, freeing the conscience from sin, and purifying our polluted nature.

Afterwards comes the baptism of Lydia; she listens to an address of St. Paul, and the Lord "opened her heart that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul," Acts xvi. 14, 15. Thus far there is no evidence on her part of anything more than the interest and attention paid to the things spoken by Paul; but this is sufficient—she was baptized, and all her household. The baptism of the Jailor, (Acts xvi. 25, 34), is similar; he "was baptized, he and all his straightway;" further on, it is said, he rejoiced and believed, but this comes only after his baptism. The question is, how he believed? for if he believed as did the Samaritans, this belief did not imply justifying faith. The same remark applies to the brief mention of the baptism of some Corinthians, "many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized," Acts xviii. There remains but one more baptism to examine, namely, that of "certain disciples," Acts xix. 1-6. Twelve men who were baptized unto John's baptism—"and when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them." But this is not all which this passage contains—"John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on Christ Jesus," verse 4. Here we have an important declaration upon the connection existing between faith and water baptism. He did not baptize believers, but people who "should believe on Christ Jesus." He preached

first to the people that they should repent, then he baptized them as a token of repentance; and then that they should believe on Jesus Christ, thus to bring forth fruits meet for repentance. John, therefore, baptized with water the called, urging them to perseverance that they might become the chosen. *Nowhere* have we found saving faith placed as a preliminary condition, while we have recognized everywhere baptism on profession—one case alone excepted. At the first formal admission of the Gentiles, and under the express direction of God, there is no condition attached to the reception of baptism; the ordinance is as freely imparted as the word of preaching; it is even a part of the preaching of repentance, more expressive than words. There is no instance of refusal or postponement, no examinations, or time of probation, an external assent to the truths of the Gospel is sufficient, and the readiness to receive the ordinance. This reception is considered proof of the assent to the preaching just heard. The condition, if there be any, is entirely subjective; it is the affair of the candidate, and not of the officiator. It is the Lord only who can distinguish the wheat from the tares, and who will give the earnest seeker the substance of his baptism, the gift of the Holy Spirit. "The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity," Matt. xiii. 41. To maintain that a person must have saving faith, that is, be regenerated before baptism, is to protest against the practice in apostolic times, for Philip baptized even a Simon Magus. Practically it would be a denial of the rite of baptism to every person, for it assumes a power in the baptizer which he has not, that of being able to read the heart, which is the prerogative of Jesus Christ alone, who is the author and finisher of our faith. Believers' baptism would be a beginning in the Spirit,—a being made perfect in the flesh. It has also the dangerous tendency to make such converts believe that they are saved,—the natural consequence when such phrases are used in regard to water baptism, as "Obey the command;" "Follow the Lord;" "Fulfil all righteousness." You will hardly be able to persuade those who have been immersed, but

who are still unregenerated, that they need a change of heart. Their faith in the outward act of immersion is supreme, for have they not been publicly acknowledged as true believers, and been "buried into the death of Christ!" This belief is greatly strengthened by the language used in their baptismal hymns, of which the following extracts will give some idea:—

"We die to sin, and seek a grave,
With Thee, beneath the yielding wave.

"And shall I be ashamed, O Lord,
With Thee to be baptized?

"Happy beyond expression they
Who find the place where Jesus lay.

"And, in the Lord's appointed way,
Fulfil all righteousness.

"We, who know the great salvation,
Are baptized beneath the wave."

In no connexion can such language be properly applied to the baptism of water, which is only a type or shadow of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The baptism of water unto repentance could not, with any propriety, be applied to Christ, but as a Priest under the law. We cannot, therefore, follow Him in baptism.

Neither is baptism the fulfilling of *all* righteousness, Matt. iii. 15, but only one of the external acts, and must not be confounded with the righteousness of faith. It is an expression borrowed from the Old Testament, and refers to the external duties of religion according to the law, Deut. vi. 25: "And it shall be our righteousness if we observe to do all the commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us."

We nowhere in Scripture find shame spoken of in connection with baptism, but St. Paul uses that word in Rom. i. 16: "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ."

Reference is frequently made in the hymns to those passages in Rom. ii. 3, 4; Col. ii, 11, 12: "buried by baptism unto death."

Now the scope or subject-matter of the passages is not *mode*—is not *water baptism*, but it is the union between Christ and His people formed by the baptism of the Spirit, ("For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body," 1 Cor. xii. 13). The obvious meaning shews that they who are thus united to Christ are, in virtue of this union, *dead and buried* with Christ as regards sin, and *risen and walking* with Christ in newness of life. It is a pity these passages containing the precious truth of union with Christ should be torn from their place and context, and twisted out of their scope and meaning to support the ceremony of immersion.

Sufficient care is not taken to instruct the young of our churches on controverted questions, such as the apostolic church, baptism, &c. They are not provided with short plain works on these subjects, and are thus left a prey to every wind of vain doctrine.

The baptism of adults as now conferred by most denominations, and by following the same discipline used for admission to the Lord's Supper, is a semi-anabaptism, contrary to Scripture. It is this practice which prepares the way for "baptismal regeneration," and "believers' baptism." Experience shews that the more unscripturally strict a Church is as to baptism, the more it is exposed to the loss of membership, by making over much of water baptism, which is an acknowledgment of the impurity of the candidate, and the necessity of a divine change. The baptism of the Holy Spirit which is the object sought for, is in a manner ignored. Let no inference, however, be drawn from this on behalf of laxity of discipline in connection with the Lord's Supper. We only protest against the transfer of the discipline of the one Sacrament to that of the other, as unjustifiable and mischievous.



INFANT BAPTISM.

(NEW TESTAMENT.)

We now invite attention to a point of difference, of as much importance as the nature of the belief of adults before water baptism,—that of the baptism of the infant children of baptized believers. The doings of the Apostles so far as recorded, are found chiefly in the Acts of the Apostles. That inspired book furnishes a brief history of the Church for about thirty years. During this time many thousands of persons must have received baptism; but of those that are named or individually specified, there are the Eunuch, Simon Magus, Saul of Tarsus, Cornelius, Lydia, the Jailor of Philippi, and Crispus. Here are seven, and in four of them their whole families were admitted with them. Did the sacred writer mean to give us a fair average of these occurrences? No Christian will deny but the Spirit of Inspiration intended to make a correct impression on our minds by a wise selection of facts. The phrases "all his house," "and her house," "he and all his," intimate that the families to which they applied were of considerable size. Four out of the seven specified were baptisms of households; but we must not overlook the fact that two, the Eunuch and Saul, had no family; thus, so far as the record goes, whenever the Apostles administered baptism to the head of a family, they admitted also his whole family to that ordinance. There is no mention made of the families of the Samaritans, but there can be no doubt that the Apostolic rule was in all cases followed. This is in perfect contrast with "Believer's Baptism," as held by some. Pressed with the difficulties of their scheme, they resort to the bold assertion that the baptized families consisted exclusively of adult believers, as though it were credible that in four households there should not be a single child too young to be baptized on his own profession. But this is only an assertion which Scripture does not warrant; for of the four baptized families, that of Crispus only is described as believing. In that respect it is a contrast

to the other households. It is claimed also, that the family of the Jailor were all believing adults; because we read that "he believed in God with all his house." Acts xvi. 34.

It is true our English translation seems to convey that idea, though that could not have been intended by the translators, for it is not so expressed in the original, it should be "and rejoiced with all his house, he having believed in God." It is alleged that since the jailor's family rejoiced with him, they must all have been adults; but if so, then the little children who rejoiced in the temple, crying, Hosanna to the Son of David, must have been adults too, though described by our Lord as "babes and sucklings." Equally futile is the argument that the jailor's family consisted of adults, because the Apostles spake the word "to all that were in the house," for that is the language usually adopted when any one addresses a congregation; we say, "he exhorted the whole assembly." "He spoke to the whole house." No one infers from such expressions that there were no little children present. In the case of Cornelius, there is no doubt that a part of those assembled were adults; but it is held that all were of this class, because we read that he was "one that feared God with all his house." That, however, may be affirmed of any household distinguished for piety, though it may contain children. It is usual to say of such, they are a God-fearing family. Nor can it avail to say, that "the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word," in the house of Cornelius; for the same thing may be true of an assembly where there is a remarkable outpouring of the Spirit. In such cases how often is it said, "the Spirit descended on the whole assembly;" "the whole audience were deeply moved." Those who use this language never mean to be understood as denying that little children were present. It is next argued that the family of Lydia were all adult believers, because the Apostles, when released from prison, "entered into her house; and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them and departed." Strange logic! the Apostle saw brethren at the house of Lydia; therefore all Lydia's family were adults! Is it possible that Paul, Silas, Luke and Timothy were many days in Philippi, and that

Lydia and the jailor were the only converts made during their stay? According to Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, it will be seen that that Church was, from the first, a flourishing one. Paul and Silas were about to leave the city, and nothing was more natural than that they should hold a farewell meeting at the residence of the hospitable Lydia. Luke, with his accustomed accuracy, designates Lydia as the only believer in the family, "whose heart the Lord had opened, so that she attended unto the things which were spoken of by Paul." Not a word about her family till he tells us that "she was baptized and her household." And the same in her invitation to the Apostles, "If ye have judged *me* to be faithful, come into my house and abide there;" she did not say, if ye have judged *us* to be faithful, which she would certainly have said, had they been all adults and believers.

Luke's account of the first planting of the Christian Church is an inspired missionary report, in which he mentions the baptisms of four whole families; of one he relates, as an interesting fact, they were all believers; of the other three he does not say this, nor does he tell us anything from which we can fairly draw such an inference.

Thus far we have confined our investigation to the book of Acts; but if we extend our inquiry to the whole of the New Testament, the only additional information bearing on the case is found in the following passage: "I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius: lest any should say that I had baptized in my own name, and I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other; for Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel," 1 Cor. i. 14-17. Stephanas was "the first fruits of Achaia." There is no record of his baptism, but here is a special one of his family. We must, therefore, add to our former list one individual and his family, making in all eight individuals and five family baptisms recorded after Christ gave the commission to his disciples. It thus appears that the Apostles never baptized the head of a family without admitting his whole family to the ordinance. Still it is asked to prove that in all the five families there was one child. As well

might it be asked to prove that, when the Israelites were "all baptized" in the sea, there were children among them.

But this is implied in the language of Paul: "And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other." Here the original word *leipon*, translated *besides*, would be more properly rendered, *as for the rest*, there being a reference to the baptized family in the previous clause. It would then read thus: "I baptized also the family of Stephanas, as for the rest (of the families) I do not know whether I baptized any other." We learn from the context that the Corinthians were divided into parties, each of which adhered to a particular teacher, in opposition to all others. The Apostle thanks God that he had baptized none of them, except Crispus and Gaius, as there was less pretext for making him the head of a party. It was true that he had also baptized the family of Stephanas, but that did not conflict with his previous statement, for they were too young to be concerned in party strife. For the same reason it was not important for him to recollect whether he had baptized any other families. But it is objected that, in the account of great numbers baptized at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, at Samaria, at Corinth, and other places, we hear nothing of any but believing adults. We answer that baptism was always, as represented in Scripture, given immediately on the first assent of the individual, and in the cases of these multitudes, it was impossible that they could have had their families present, therefore they baptized the adults at one time and their families at another. Crispus, for instance, was baptized by Paul, and his household by another party, so the baptism of Stephanas and that of his family must have taken place on separate occasions. And such cases must have been of frequent occurrence. Had it not been for the party strife existing at Corinth, we should not have heard of any baptisms but those of adults there; but in censuring them, the Apostle incidentally mentions one family baptism, and gives an intimation of others. But not only have the doings of the Apostles given testimony to the fact, that they baptized infants, but their words prove that they meant to tell us so.

The Greek word *Oikos*, employed by the Apostle to designate the households that were baptized, is one, the meaning of which is perfectly ascertained in the Septuagint, that guide to the religious language of the writers of the New Testament—it means a family which contains little children, and here is an instance in point,—“The house of Jacob which came into Egypt were three score and ten,” and elsewhere, the “household of his sons,” are reported to have included their “little ones, and their wives,” Gen. xlv. 18, 19. In baptizing, therefore, a household, the man, his wife and little ones were included.

To this, it is objected that it is circumstantial evidence. “Give us a direct warrant, a declaration by the Apostles in so many words, that they baptized infants.” Those who make this objection ought to be aware that circumstantial or inferential proof is in some cases as conclusive as any direct command. When the Apostle says he was “caught up to the third heaven,” I certainly infer there is a first and second, though I nowhere read expressly of any such thing. It is the very kind of proof which our Saviour adduced to the Sadducees, who rejected the doctrine of the resurrection, who possibly required a direct warrant, a “Thus saith the Lord, *the dead shall rise.*” To those ancient sceptics, Christ offered a species of evidence as difficult to evade as any direct warrant. The Lord addressing Moses, said “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” “God is not,” said Christ, “the God of the dead, but of the living,” Matt. xxii. 32. This *inferential* proof in the judgment of Christ was conclusive. Paul has since declared in so many words that “the dead shall rise;” and yet there are professed Christians who deny or explain it away. We may rest assured that had any of the sacred writers used that very language, there would have been still room for cavilling. Even as it is, when Christ’s language and conduct to little children are brought forward, the answer is “Oh yes, metaphorical children.” The inspired writers, foreseeing that all such language would be liable to cavil, chose a different method of conveying the truth, one less susceptible of misconstruction than that demanded. O° eight individual

baptisms specified by the sacred writer, five had their families baptized. Nor do they ever tell us of the baptism of the head of a family without expressly informing us that his whole family were baptized.

It is assumed that the command of the risen Saviour, "Go teach all nations, baptizing them," was the only commission to baptize which the Apostles ever received; whereas some time previous it was said, they "made and baptized more disciples than John," which they would not have done without authority. Again, it is assumed that the Apostles were bound to take the aforesaid command as the exclusive rule of baptism, independently of any previous instruction of the Saviour; but why then did Christ promise that after his departure the Holy Spirit should "bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever he had said unto them," John xiv. 26. Christ's instructions to His disciples, so far as they relate to baptism, are contained in the following Scriptures:—

"Then were brought to him little children, that he should put his hands on them and pray, and his disciples rebuked them, but Jesus said suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven, and he laid his hands on them and departed thence," Matt. xix. 13-15; Mark x, 13-16; Luke xviii. 15-17.

"I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven," Matt. xvi. 19; John xx. 23.

"Go ye, therefore, and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," Matt. xxiii. 19-20.

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature, he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned," Mark xvi. 15-16.

In the passage where mention is made of little children as having been brought to Christ, it is plain they must have been quite small, for St. Luke calls them infants, and St. Mark tells

us that the Saviour "took them up in His arms." The parents must have been believers or they would not have sought His blessing upon their children. But the disciples rebuked those that brought them. They had the same mind that some have now. "Do not bring your infants now, wait till they are old enough to come themselves, what good can it do to lay hands on an infant?" With this illjudged conduct of His disciples, Jesus was much displeased, and suiting His action to His words, He laid His hands on them and blessed them; thus spurning the unworthy suggestion that infants could receive no good from Him. His words are the fullest guarantee possible that the faith that brought them was acceptable to Him, giving a blessing to infants He never gave to adults. But why, it is asked, does it not say Christ baptized them? We answer, Jesus never baptized with water, and these infants had been dedicated to God by circumcision, which was still in force,—*"of such,"* says Christ, *"is the kingdom of heaven."* Of whom does He speak? Not of little children, say those who are of the same mind as the disciples, but of *those who resemble children*. They would have Christ's meaning to be, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me, for of adults *who resemble them* is the kingdom of heaven." The true way to ascertain who are meant by the phrase *"of such"* is to refer to other passages where the same language is used. The original word translated *"such"* is *toioutos*, occurs in the following texts: "The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh *such* to worship him," (John iv. 23), that is, he seeketh those very persons to worship Him. Away with *such* a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live, Acts xxii. 22. According to some persons, the Jews meant not Paul himself, but only those like him. We say, this very Paul and all like him. "But, and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned, and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned, nevertheless, *such* shall have trouble in the flesh," 1 Cor. vii. 28. On the former principle, it would not be those who marry, but only those who resemble them that are meant. "If any man that is called a brother, be a fornicator, with *such* an one, no, not to eat," (1 Cor. vii.), that is,

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not to eat with the very pers specified. "*Such* are false apostles, deceitful workers," 2 Cor. xi. 13. The identical persons described were false apostles, and so were all others who were like them. "He is proud, knowing nothing, from *such* withdraw thyself." (1 Tim. vi. 4, 5), that is, from the very persons specified, as well as all who are like them. Many other examples could be given if these were not sufficient. The unvarying current of Scripture usage proves that when Christ said, "*of such* is the kingdom of heaven," he meant *of them*—that is, of little children is the kingdom of heaven, as well as of others. Christ must then be understood as making known to his disciples that infants, or little children, were a component part of his visible Church, which was to extend over all the earth. It was important that the Apostles should have a correct understanding on this subject, because Christ was about to entrust them with the highest authority in His Church,—the keys of the kingdom of heaven, that is to say, of that very kingdom of which infants are a component part; and whatsoever they should bind on earth, should be bound in heaven. They would be authorized to open the Gospel dispensation, and to declare what persons should be admitted to the visible Church, or excluded. It may be here remarked, that if by the "kingdom of heaven" is to be understood the *kingdom of glory*, the position of infants is strengthened; for if they are admitted into the redeemed family above, who will dare to exclude them from the visible family of Christ on earth? Who will pretend that the Church below is more pure and select than the Church above? The command is to baptize all nations, "Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

It is said by some, that the Apostles were bound to put a rigid interpretation on this last command of Christ, paying no regard to any previous instruction, and that infants not being expressly named, they had no authority to baptize them; but, if this were true, the Apostles had no right to baptize females, for neither are they expressly named, on the contrary, only the masculine gender is expressed. "*He* that believeth and is baptized." The instructions which the Apostles had

already received, rendered it unnecessary that the Lord should specify either infants or females in His last command to baptize. The Lord Jesus, long before His death, had authorized His Apostles both to preach and baptize; but their instructions limited them to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." After his resurrection, he assigned them the world as their field. The command, instead of excluding children, is so worded as to make room for them. It will be observed, that the word *teach* occurs twice in our translation of the passage, "*Go teach all nations,*" and "*teaching* them to observe all things." In the original, there is no such repetition, the words are different, and differ in their signification. The first word rendered "teach," *matheteusate*, means "to disciple," or make scholars, and should be rendered, "Go, disciple all nations, baptizing them, *dichaskonte*, teaching them, &c. Now, it is clear enough, that the baptizing and teaching are the two things needed for the fulfillment of the commission "to disciple." Baptism is the outward part—the putting, as it were, into school,—the instruction received then makes them in the full sense disciples, indeed. Thus, we see the place of baptism, as admitting into the visible Church, or Kingdom of Heaven, the recognized place of subjection to Christ's authority as Lord; a Kingdom, to which *of right*, by the Master's word, infants belong. The commission is not general, and refers only to the baptism of the heathen, and applies exclusively to "the nations." From this, it is generally inferred, that there is here a command to baptize all mankind, but it is not the case, though the authorized translation is liable to lead one into that error. The word in the original is, "the Gentiles," "the Heathen," in opposition to the Jews. The command is a formal revocation of a previous injunction given to the disciples at the time of their first mission, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles." Now, all being accomplished, he orders them, saying, "Go ye and disciple all the Gentiles, baptizing them, and teaching them." The injunction is literally to make them disciples. But how is this to be accomplished? First, in *baptizing* them; secondly, in *teaching* them. There is nothing placed before baptism, unless it be the assent to receive it, which in the commission of

Jesus is merely implied, and not expressed, because it is a matter of course. The Lord wishes that the Gentiles, in order to enter His kingdom, should commence at the first by a ceremony of initiation, by the purifying water of baptism, given at the moment they consent to receive it, followed by the teaching.

If the commission does not enter into particulars, it has the widest range ever contended for as to subjects for baptism. Nations are composed of adults and children, and the Lord orders nations to be baptized. Infant baptism is implied as much as adult; if one is denied so must the other be, unless some counter order or restraining declaration, tantamount to a positive order of divine authority, is found in Scripture. We are bound to have our children baptized, or disobey the command. But it is well known that no such exceptional injunction is found in Scripture, therefore, those who deny infant baptism would require to add to the command, "Baptize the adults of all nations," which would leave out the young and rising nation. At this point we are met with objections. It is asked, for instance, is not baptism a command? Yes, it is commanded! The next question is, have you then for yourself obeyed this command? It matters not what your parents may have in your infancy done for you, have you obeyed it for yourself? This is plausible, and deserves a serious reply. Baptism is a command only to baptizers, not to people to be baptized; "Go ye and disciple all nations, baptizing them," was a command to the *eleven*. It was their commission, and defined their duty; of course it shews also the Lord's will plain enough that I should be baptized. His mind expressed in this way is as authoritative and as much to be obeyed as any other command, but the form of the command is of the greatest importance, if we would understand what the Lord's mind is. He does not say to believers or persons capable of understanding the commission, "be baptized." He does not say to any, "Be baptized;" but He says to some, *baptize*; and if in obedience to that command I have been baptized in infancy, there is no other command on that subject to be obeyed by me.

The common objection to the baptism of children is, that faith is necessary to baptism, and that as infants cannot believe, they should not be baptized. "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be condemned." We surely see at once that the great question raised in these words is of far greater solemnity than that of water baptism, it is a question of salvation or condemnation. The passage speaks of the baptism that saves, namely, that of the Holy Spirit. In any honest construction of the passage, you must take the two clauses of it as applying with equal force to the same class of persons in its whole extent. Thus, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," therefore, one must believe before he can be baptized, and infants being unable to believe ought not to be baptized.

That the reader may see and judge for himself how identical the argument is, I append both cases so that they may be under his eye at the same time:—

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." But infants cannot believe,—

Therefore,
The infant is not to be baptized.

"He that believeth not shall be condemned." But the infant cannot believe,—

Therefore,
The infant shall be condemned.

We pronounce the conclusion in both instances to be utterly false. But the advocate of "Believers' baptism" maintains that the conclusion in the first instance is true, and that the conclusion in the second case is false. It is with them therefore to show, if they can, how the same argument can conduct to a true conclusion in the one case, and to a false conclusion in the other. The fact is that the passage before us does not touch the question of infants at all. The terms of it show they are not contemplated. It is *not* said "he that believeth and is baptized with water." And yet how often is this important alteration made; but surely if Scripture had meant *that*, it would have somewhere said it. So far from this being the case in the true commission to baptize, "Go ye and disciple all nations, baptizing them;" belief is not spoken of at

all, a thing which would seem to trouble many, if we are to judge by the way in which they seek to append the passage in St. Mark to it. It is curious to read the comments upon it. "The commission binds me to baptize believers and no others," says one. "To make disciples, and baptize them," says another. A third asks for express warrant to baptize infants, and finds none in the commission. Now the passage which draws forth these remarks says absolutely nothing about believers, nothing about adults any more than infants, but to "disciple and baptize all nations."

Let us now apply another text to the argument, "He who does not believe should not be baptized; infants, therefore, not believing, should not be baptized." Applying the same logic to a passage perfectly analogous in its form, Scripture says, "This we command you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat," 2 Thess. iii. 10. Infants cannot work, neither should they eat. According to the logic of Believers' baptism, there is more biblical proof for denying infants food, for Scripture has never said or implied that believers alone should receive the baptism of water; but it declares positively that he who will not work should not eat. And when the Apostle says, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved;" infants cannot call upon the name of the Lord, therefore infants cannot be saved. The truth is the argument in both cases is the merest sophism. It can impose on no man who knows what correct reasoning is. The children of christian parents being declared holy, they should receive the sign of holiness. St. Paul, in writing to the *Saints* of the Church in Corinth, tells them, "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy," 1 Cor. vii. 14. The word in the original is *Saint*, the very same which is applied to the parents and members of the Church, 1 Cor. i. 2. The believers are *Saints*, and their infants are also *Saints*, so says the Apostle to the Gentiles, or rather the Word of God says so. Many ingenious and far-fetched hypotheses have been made, in order to explain

away this holiness of believers' infants, which absolutely cannot be reconciled with the system of Believers' Baptism. Yet whatever ingenious explanation may be made about the nature of this holiness, it matters not, the fact established by the Apostle cannot be altered that children are holy in the same sense that their parents are. The Lord also speaks of them under that head as the acknowledged members of the Church of God. "And He took a little child and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me," Mark ix. 36, 37. That this was a child in regard to his age, the circumstance of our Lord taking him in his arms, settles beyond dispute. "Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me." To receive a person in the name of Christ is to treat him as belonging to Christ, as one in visible union with Him, as a member of the Church of which He is the head. Is it possible to receive a person in the name of Christ without considering that person as visibly belonging to Christ? It appears impossible. But as Christ knows best what His own words imply, He shall determine the question. "Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ," Mark ix. 41. Thus it appears that to give to any in *His name*, is to give to them because they belong to Christ; and when Christ speaks of receiving little children in His name, we are to consider little children as visibly belonging to Him, and if belonging to Him who is the Head of the Church, it is because they belong to that Church of which He is the Head.

And yet there are persons who say, "show us an express command in the New Testament for the admission of infants to baptism? If you cannot find a *thus saith the Lord* for it, they must be excluded." This is a rule that will work both ways. We ask you in turn for a special command *against* baptizing children. The Lord commanded the Apostles to baptize nations, and they preach to the people that "the promise is to them and their children." Show us in Scripture a

single instance of a parent being baptized without his children. There is not a word of prohibition, or a single instance of exclusion. Besides, this reasoning will exclude many things which you practice, and hold as Scripture doctrine. Where is the command to baptize women? There is none; but there are two instances of such baptisms, and this suffices you. To us the examples of so many more households baptized is also quite sufficient. Where do you find the command, or a single instance on record, that women should participate in the Lord's Supper? Where do you find the command, a declaration, or a single instance to the effect that the Sabbath has been transferred from the last day of the week to the first? Whence do you draw your rule on which all your Church discipline rests,—that the communion must be granted only to such as are baptized? Where do you find in the New Testament that man should have but one wife? Neither is there a word of explanation as to the mode of baptism; it is only from the Old Testament as a foundation, and connecting with it the practice of baptism, that we obtain the right to perpetuate it. Thus, without formal command or special example, you acknowledge many things as rules of Scripture binding on the conscience of the Christian, things which can only be proved by inference, the same kind of proof that the Lord offered to the Sadduces to prove the resurrection of the dead. It is neither consistent nor honest to assert that unless there be a formal command, a *thus saith the Lord*, children ought not to be baptized. But we have the command of Jesus Christ to baptize nations; and the command which contains the whole, contains also each part.

Our object is to see what is actually the meaning of baptism. God has given a sign of His mercy to the world—can it be narrow and incomprehensive? Is there no place for infants in the great scheme of the mercy of God? I ask the adherent of Believers' baptism, what do you do with the children? The answer is, "It is a great mystery, I leave it with God, I leave them to the uncovenanted mercies of God." Where are the children who have died in infancy? In heaven,

in the heavenly state? but that is salvation. Is there salvation without Christ? Is there a salvation possible by nature? No, being saved by the atonement of Christ we give them Christ's sign. He who took them in His arms on earth will not cast them out of heaven. Moreover, they are distinctly mentioned,—“the promise,” that is the covenant, “is to you, and to your children, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call.” “There is no other name under heaven whereby men must be saved;” but according to “Believers’ Baptism” there is some other name it seems necessary for infants. It is, however, objected, Children cannot think, morally, they cannot feel, they cannot act. We see in this the force of believers’ baptism, but cannot understand that of infants,—To which we reply: You entirely misconceive the intention of the ordinance of baptism in its teaching, the gifts and calling of God are *without*, that is, they are before repentance. Baptism is like circumcision, it is God’s sacrament with us, rather than ours with God. It is “the promise of the Lord,” the sign of the covenant, of the covenant of grace. Can you take up a child and say grace has done nothing here, grace is doing nothing here? A child is born into his earthly family unconscious of that fact himself. The germ of the man and the citizen is in the child; so also is he born at once into the kingdom of grace, Christ has provided for him. He has atoned for original sin, till the child takes it upon himself.

“Christ has for all a ransom made,
For all a full atonement paid.”

But we may trample under foot the blood, and do despite to the Spirit of Grace, and so forfeit our inheritance, “as many of you as have been baptized unto Christ, have put on Christ.” It has been contended that this is certainly the profession of personal faith in Christ, such as of course no infant could give. It has been thought that “putting on” must be the act of the person baptized, and that as incapable of such an act, infants must be excluded. But when we look at what it represents, we see that it is not the act of the baptized at all—the act is that of the baptizer; it is plain “that the putting on of

Christ," which baptism signifies, is not our own act. If He is my "robe of righteousness," it was not my own hand that clothed me with it. Salvation is not meted out merely to clearness of understanding,—to depth of conviction—to precision of reasoning—these are qualities some people honour, by the name of faith, and make heaven accessible only to cultivated intellects. No. There are infants of fifty years old, as well as infants of a few days; I believe in their salvation on the principle of grace. Baptism is the passive sacrament and ordinance, as the Supper is the active. Baptism is that which, like birth, proclaims a grace before our being, shows how the gifts and calling of God are before us. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done," etc., Tit. iii. 5. Justification which is the general law, the means by which God can save, and by which a sinner can be saved, is the official work of salvation. It is the manifestation of the righteousness of God, and its sign is baptism. Justification takes place independently of our consciousness just as birth does. It is an act, it is not a growth. A man cannot be justified twice, any more than Christ could die twice. "Christ was once offered," and we are once baptized. Sanctification on the contrary, is personal,—it is conscious—it is the life of God manifesting itself in the individual; and its sign is the Lord's Supper; and inasmuch as it is a growth and development, and not an act, we repeat that Sacrament often. It will, however, be said, how many fall away from their baptism, but that occurs in adult as well as in infant baptism. What saith the Scripture? What is the kingdom of heaven like? The lost sheep had been in the fold before it was lost; and the piece of silver had been in the woman's possession before it was lost, and the wheat and the tares grew together; they were all in the kingdom of grace. However, our baptized ones need the exhortation, "take heed unto the things which ye have received." The bud, the young twig, the branch, is in the tree; but the Lord says, "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered," John xv. 8; but then the man must have been in the kingdom before he could be cast out. Therefore baptism is the sign of a dispensation, not

necessarily of a personal profession,—a declaration of the faithfulness of Christ, rather than our faith in Christ. Salvation comes to our consciousness after the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but believers' baptism is a fallacy rooted in the thought that our salvation *depends* on our personal consciousness. This is its foundation, and the secret of the tenacity with which it is held. It is man's addition to free salvation as it is in Christ, and practically takes the work of salvation into our own hands.

The keys of the Kingdom of Heaven intrusted to the Apostles were first employed on the day of Pentecost. They then opened the Gospel dispensation, and made known the terms of admission to Christ's visible kingdom. If children hitherto embraced in that kingdom, were to be excluded, that was the time to make the announcement; but instead of this, the Apostle in his first exhortation to Christian baptism, includes children with their parents. "Repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, for the promise is unto you, and to your children," Acts ii. 38, 39. Why did the Apostle make this particular mention of the children of those whom he addressed, if he designed to exclude them from baptism? His language is quite inexplicable on such a supposition; but the Apostle here alludes to the promise contained in the covenants made to the Mosaical ablu-tions, and circumcision, for without a knowledge of these there can be no real knowledge of baptism, and the rite becomes uncertain and vague.



INFANT BAPTISM.

(OLD TESTAMENT.)

There are three covenants made by the Lord, with man. The first is the covenant with Noah, which has for its sign the rainbow. This covenant with Noah extends to all his race, but is officially concluded with the males only; "And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, 'And behold I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; and with every living creature,'" Gen. ix. 8, 12. It is a covenant of temporal mercy, the promise of preserving animal existence. It is perpetual, and continues in full force. The second covenant is made with Abraham; "The Lord appeared to him, and said, 'I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an *everlasting* covenant, to be a God unto thee, and thy seed after thee. Every man-child among you shall be circumcised, and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an *everlasting* covenant,'" Gen. xvii. 1-14. We could not think of giving the lie to God, and therefore we believe Him upon His own word, when He solemnly declares that His covenant with Abraham is an everlasting one. We believe also, without the slightest hesitation, the subsequent declarations of the Holy Spirit, when, after the introduction of the third covenant, He teaches us that the second is not abrogated, and confirms unto us its spiritual import. We accept also the interpretation which St. Paul gives of this text, when he explains that this promise of becoming the father of many nations does not concern the Jewish race exclusively, which forms only one nation, but includes also the Gentiles, and that this is a paternity of faith, Rom. iv. 12, 17, 18. We accept also his explanations that the promise made in reference to the seed includes Christ, and that

through Christ all believers under the third covenant are the seed of Abraham. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the *promise*," Gal. iii. 15, 16, 29. We have, therefore, God's pledge, that the alliance has neither been abolished nor altered. The sign of the covenant alone,—circumcision, has been modified, or rather absorbed by the new sign, baptism. Thus the first covenant is not annulled by the second, and the third covenant has only added to the first two, without taking anything away. When, therefore, the Apostle in his first exhortation to Christian baptism, says, "The promise is unto you and your children," how would he be understood by his audience? We must bear in mind, that they were Jews whom he addressed, for it was not till seven years later, at the house of Cornelius, that the first Gentiles were publicly admitted to baptism; those Jews would undoubtedly recur to the great promise made to Abraham, in which Jehovah declared that he would be a God to him, and to his seed after him. This promise was continually in their thoughts; and in view of their entering the Christian Church, the question would naturally arise, whether it had been revoked, and their children cast out. The Apostle tells them that the promise is still to them and their children, and on this ground urges them to repent and be baptized. That the Apostles baptized little children, and that they were authorized to do so by the instructions of their Divine Master, is clear. It is equally clear, that in the absence of any specific instructions on the subject, they would have been led to the same course, by their perfect understanding of the *essential sameness of the Church of God under all dispensations*. For the Christian Church is simply a continuation of the Patriarchal and Jewish Churches, with a change only in the ordinances and forms of worship. The right of membership is the same in all, and as infants were received into the Old Testament Church by circumcision, they must be admitted to the New Testament Church by baptism. These several points we will establish in their proper order.

The Apostles understood the Christian Church to be a continuation of the Jewish Church, since they made no new or-

ganization. The gospel dispensation was fully opened by them on the day of Pentecost, and if the foundations of a new Church were to be laid, that was the proper time for the work. But no such thing was attempted; the Christian Church was already in existence, and had been convened some days before the day of Pentecost, for the transaction of business, Acts i. 15, 16. They constituted the first Christian Church, and to them were added the three thousand converts baptized on the day of Pentecost. But how did those hundred and twenty find their way into the Church? It is certain that they were not baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. *They had been received into the Church under the former dispensation, by circumcision; and had not forfeited their standing by the rejection of Christ.* When, therefore, the unbelieving Jews, with their children, were cut off by a judicial sentence, pronounced by the Saviour four days before his death, (Matt. xxiii. 37, 38; Luke xix. 41, 44), these remained in the Church, and formed the nucleus around which the converted in after times were gathered. As they had never lost their standing in the Church, it was not proper that they should be subjected to an initiatory rite. It is no objection to this that those Jews, who were converted after they had been cut off, were required to be baptized, notwithstanding they had been circumcised: for, being cut off under a former dispensation, it was proper that they should be placed on the same footing with the world at large, and should enter the Church in the same manner as the Gentiles.

That the Apostles regarded the Jewish and Christian Churches as essentially the same, appears from their own declarations. The Apostle Paul, speaking of the excision of the great body of the Jews, writes thus: "For if the first fruit be holy, the lump is holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them made partakers of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, the branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well,

because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold, therefore, his goodness and the severity of God; on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in the goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree, how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!" Rom. xi. 16-24. Here the Apostle represents the visible Church of God under the figure of a good olive tree. Of the natural branches, namely, the Jews, the greater part broken off. And what followed? Was the tree destroyed? No such thing; the tree remained, and the Gentiles, branches of a wild olive, were grafted into it. This is Scripture proof that the Christian Church is a continuation of the Jewish. But this is not all, the Apostle looks forward to the period when the Jews, the natural branches, shall be restored, that is, they shall be grafted into *their own* olive tree," in other words, they shall be re-instated in that very Church from which they were cut off for unbelief. Language cannot be more explicit in reference to the substantial sameness of the Church under both dispensations. The Apostle addresses the Ephesians thus: "Wherefore, remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision, by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world," Eph. ii. 11, 12. What was that "commonwealth of Israel," from which these Gentiles were once aliens? What but that Church of God to which the Jews belonged.

Bearing this in mind, let us hear the Apostle further: "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Pro-

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phets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone," ver. 19, 20. Who were "the saints" with whom those Gentiles had now become fellow-citizens? They were the Patriarchs and Prophets: Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah. Again, what was that "household of God" of which the Ephesians had become members? The visible society of the saints of all ages. And what is that one mystical temple, in laying whose foundations both Prophets and Apostles united? No other than that visible Church of God, which abides the same under all dispensations. The same truth is established by indisputable facts. The Church under both dispensations, worshipped and obeyed the same Triune God, acknowledged the same moral law, and received the same glorious Gospel; for "unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them," Heb. iv. 2. Under both dispensations, the Church looked by faith to the same atoning Saviour, through the shedding of whose blood was remission of sins; taught the same fundamental truths; insisted on the same terms of salvation, namely, faith and repentance; and required the same qualifications for Church-membership. But the numerous and burdensome rites of the old dispensation passed away at the death of Christ, and a few simple ordinances were appointed in their stead.

Let us not, however, commit so great an error as to suppose that external forms constitute the essence of a Church, or that they may not be changed to any extent by the Supreme Lawgiver, without affecting the identity of His visible kingdom. The ceremonial law was appointed for temporary purposes, to keep the Jews distinct from the surrounding heathen, and direct their minds to the coming Messiah. It was "a shadow of good things to come." Its bloody sacrifices pointed to the Cross of Christ, and its "divers washings" typically represented the sanctification of the heart and life by the Holy Spirit. When Christ at last appeared and offered Himself on the cross, that law, having answered its purpose, expired by virtue of its own limitation, leaving the Church unimpaired by the change. It is objected against our doctrine, that faith and holiness were not required of the Jewish Church, *as such*, and that, therefore, it cannot be the same as the Christian Church.

What an imputation is this against infinite purity! That He should constitute a visible Church and not require faith and holiness of its members! The character of God, and the whole tenor of the Old Testament Scriptures refute the foul and perilous assertion, and shew that God has always required faith and holiness of all who entered into covenant with Him. Look at the following passages: "Thou hast avouched the Lord this day, to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes and his commandments, and his judgments; and to hearken unto his voice: and the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments; and to make thee high above all nations, which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be a *holy* people unto the Lord thy God as he hath spoken," Deut. xxvi. 17, 19: Psalm xxviii.: Heb. iii. 16, 19. This would be similar to the error of an ancient sect, who maintained that the Jewish Church was the Church of an inferior God, who had fallen from his pristine virtue and dignity; that the Old Testament Scriptures having been inspired by this inferior deity, were of no binding authority, and that the object of Christ's mission was to destroy his empire, and introduce the worship of the Supreme God. This sect has long ceased to exist, but those who decry the Old Testament Church, as though its religion were false, and its ordinances of no value, practically do the same thing. But who are we that we should speak lightly of institutions ordained by infinite wisdom and purity? What though the great body of the Jewish Church, at different periods departed from God, and perverted His ordinances? The same things have befallen the Christian Church. We should bear in mind that the constitution and laws, which God gave to his Church, were good and pure, however they may have been abused by man. Ever since the fall, God has had a Church on earth professing the true religion. The external exhibitions of His grace to that Church may be compared to a rivulet taking its rise from the first promise of a Saviour, till it expands into a broad river at the Cross of Christ, and extends its healing virtue to all nations of the earth. Since the

Jewish and Christian Churches are substantially the same, the right of membership in both is the same, and as infants were, by the express authority of God, introduced into the one, they are equally entitled to membership in the other. Membership of infants in the Church is, in the minds of some people, associated with communing at the Lord's table, and voting in ecclesiastical meetings; but these things are in nowise essential to Church membership. In all civilized countries, children are recognized as citizens of the commonwealth, as much so as adults. Yet those infant citizens do not exercise the elective franchise, or hold office, till they reach a certain age, and possess certain qualifications. Just so, and in the same sense, the children of professing christians belong to the visible Church, they are enrolled as disciples in the Church—the school of Christ; and on attaining maturity, and giving evidence of faith in Christ, are admitted to the Lord's table.

Let us now consider *that* rite by which infants, eight days old, were recognized as members of the visible Church, and see if its import is not essentially the same as that of baptism. Circumcision bound all its subjects to obey the whole law. "I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law," Gal. v. 3. Does baptism impose stronger obligations than these? Circumcision was a sign of holiness of heart; "Circumcision is that of the heart," Rom. ii. 29. "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul," Deut. xxx. 6. All agree that baptism is a sign of holiness. Circumcision being a bloody rite, pointed to the atonement of Christ. Baptism directs our minds to the blood of sprinkling. "Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water," Heb. x. 22. Circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith, "And he received the sign of circumcision, as a seal of the righteousness of faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised," Rom. iv. 11. Can more be affirmed of baptism? Now we are told that circumcision was intended as a mark of Hebrew descent, and of temporal privileges, rather than of a religious relation. In proof of this, it

is urged that the Ishmaelites and Edomites were circumcised. The Ishmaelites and Edomites were apostates from the faith of Abraham, and the abuse of circumcision by apostates, does not prove that it was not the initiating rite of the Church. The same might be said of baptism, since the Mormons practice baptism, and yet do not enter the Christian Church, therefore, baptism cannot be the initiatory rite.

Circumcision was not a mark of Jewish descent, for the stranger of any nation, who embraced the true religion was circumcised. Such is the nature of that ordinance, which was administered to infants of eight days old, by the express command of God. If objection is made to the baptism of infants because it imposes obligations which the child cannot at the time understand, the same objection applies to circumcision. It is evident that the two ordinances hold the same place, signify the same things, and impose similar obligations. Old Testament believers knew that the circumcision of their children which was outward in the flesh, did not change their hearts; yet they dedicated them to God in that ordinance; exercising faith in the everlasting covenant, wherein God had promised to be a God unto them, and their seed after them; which could only be fulfilled by the act of God in the circumcision of their hearts. So also the New Testament believers baptize their children, anticipating no benefit from the mere application of water, but praying for the fulfillment of that precious promise, "I will pour out my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring," (Isa. xlv), which is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. A slight acquaintance with Scripture will teach us, how constantly the Grace of God links a man with his house; thus, Noah prepared an ark to the saving of his house, (Heb. xi. 7), not for their piety, but for his; "Come thou, and all thy house into the ark, for *thee* have I seen righteous before Me in this generation," Gen. vii. 1. The covenant with Abraham is a most important fact in the same way; blessing to the seed for the sake of him from whom they sprang; even as it is said of Israel, "beloved for the fathers' sakes," Rom. xi. 28. Take Phinehas as another example, Num. xxv. 13. Still more, David and his house, 2 Sam. vii. 16. Or,

plainer still in the New Testament, see how in God's mind salvation for a man is connected with salvation for his house, just as in the type of it in the Passover, it was "a lamb for an house," Exodus xii. 3. The manna was gathered, "every man for them which were in his tents," Exodus xvi. 16. The Lord said to Zaccheus: "this day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham," Abraham's faith accompanied by Abraham's blessing. "The promise is unto you and your children." So again in the angel's message to Cornelius: "Who shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved." Finally, similar language is used to the jailor: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Baptism, like circumcision, is above all a family institution; and also gives a right of admission into the Church. Let us here insert the true meaning of the word baptize, namely, to purify. The prophets prepared the baptism of the Gospel by making the purification by water a symbol of spiritual purification, "Wash you and make you clean," Isaiah i. 16; iv. 4; Ezekiel xxxvi. 23, 27; Psalms li. 2-7.

This idea of purifying throws a spiritual light on several passages. For instance, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved"—substitute purify for baptize, and you read, "He that believeth and is purified, shall be saved," referring to the spiritual purification of sin by the agency of the Holy Spirit. Again, the baptism for the dead, ordered by Moses, (Numb. xix.), and alluded to by St. Paul, (1 Cor. xv. 29), means that purification is necessary after contact with the dead. This world is a world of the dead; it is defiled by sin, and death is the consummation of sin. Christian baptism is a baptism for the dead; it expresses the spiritual idea that man is defiled by contact with the world, and by belonging to it; and that he needs to be purified by Christ before he can draw near to God.

Circumcision was practised jointly with baptism during the whole Apostolic age. The new covenant is introduced by John the Baptist, and adopts for its sign a rite prophetically

enjoined by Moses, as a symbol of purification from sin. The law of Moses came to an end, but the old covenant remains standing and immovable, for God has declared it everlasting; nor was its token suppressed, for disciples were both circumcised and baptized. Twenty years after the death of Christ, at the time of the Council of Jerusalem, all the Christians of the model Church in that city, were still circumcising their children, and it is then only that Paul obtains an Apostolic decision which renders the practice of circumcision optional for Gentiles, even after their baptism, Acts xv. It is then decided for the first time that the practice shall not be obligatory in the Church; but it continued to receive the sanction of the Apostles, and even Paul, who made least of it, afterwards circumcised Timothy, Acts xvi. The practice continues in the Church as far as the historical accounts of the New Testament carry us, and the Abyssinians retain circumcision with baptism to the present day, and practice both on the same person, on the ground of conformity to the example of the Saviour, a practice for which they can scarcely be blamed, if baptism does not belong to all who had a right to circumcision. Baptism is not less in importance than circumcision; for, were this the case, the Church would never have given up the latter, but would have claimed her Apostolic right to practice it. Baptism, therefore, being as a sign, or token, neither more nor less than circumcision, is certainly equal to it in value. The identity of the two rites is evident, and results from the very nature of the covenants and their signs.

Let us add some formal declarations of Scripture. St. Paul expressly declares that we are circumcised by baptism; "In whom also ye were circumcised with circumcision not made with hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with him in your baptism," Col. ii. 11, 12. It is true that reference is here made to spiritual circumcision and spiritual baptism; but to concede that, in their spiritual meaning, these two figures are identical, is to concede that, in their highest bearing, the one is equivalent of the other. Circumcision is called "a seal of

the righteousness of faith," Rom. iv. 11. There is nothing said more elevated than this in reference to baptism, which cannot therefore be more spiritual than circumcision. That seal of the righteousness of faith was placed formerly, by order of God, upon infants, and circumcision cannot cease, without this spiritual seal being continued to them under some new form; but there is no other form than baptism. Baptism, therefore, takes the place of circumcision, and is the seal of the righteousness of faith upon infants, as well as upon adults. There is nothing new here; the novelty would be, if the seal were withdrawn from infants; and for this a special order would be required. Great pains are taken to shew that Abraham received circumcision only after faith, and that for this reason only is the rite called a seal of the righteousness of faith. But it is equally certain that the seal of the faith of the parent was placed upon the children. There is not a word under the New Covenant to indicate that any alteration was made in regard to it. It is, therefore, now as ever, the will of God that the seal of the righteousness of faith, under one form or the other, should be placed upon the children of believers. Circumcision was given to children that were *holy* through the circumstance of their birth; that is, born of circumcised or believing parents, Luke ii. 23. So also under the New Covenant, the children of baptized parents are also *holy*, 1 Cor. vii. 14.

Circumcision and baptism differ as to form, but have all their symbolical and spiritual features in common. They are both: 1st. A sign or token of a covenant; 2nd. A rite of initiation; 3rd. A seal of the righteousness of faith; 4th. The symbol of an internal change; 5th. They are conferred upon holy infants; 6th. Given but once to the same individual; 7th. They neither save nor change the heart, but form only an external people of the called; 8th. They both imply a solemn promise towards God, 1 Peter iii. 21. These common features make them virtually the same religious institution, with only a modification in the external form. When the Galatians were worked upon by judaizing brethren, who insisted upon circumcising them, and making them keep the law of Moses, Paul

opposed energetically the circumcision of the Gentiles, saying to them, "I testify to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law," Gal. v. 3. These words appear in contradiction to those of Romans iv. and Galatians iii., where Paul shows, on the contrary, that circumcision is a token of faith, exterior to the law, and independent of it. The contradiction vanishes when it is remembered that those against whom Paul testifies were baptized Christians. If after their baptism, they make it a case of conscience and necessity to receive circumcision, they declare by this very act that they did not hold their baptism to be sufficient, and in denying the sign of the new covenant, they denied the covenant itself. This perfect freedom in reference to circumcision, and the exceptional circumstances under which alone Paul opposed it, are fully shewn by the accusations brought against the Apostle on this very point; "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are informed of thee that thou teachest all the Jews which are amongst the Gentiles, that they ought not to circumcise their children," Acts xxi. 21. The accusation is false, verse 24. Infant baptism was the only thing which could gradually reconcile this difference of practice, and bring external unity to the Church. The Apostles, who spared the Jews, and respected their religious feelings, did not deem it expedient to issue a special order for infant baptism, nor to urge its practice. It would have been a premature step, and they would have caused themselves to be looked upon as the enemies of circumcision, by pressing the substitution of an equivalent. They knew that in time baptism would prevail exclusively as the only sign of covenant with God.



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THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH.

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There is found in most treatises on baptism, a disquisition deemed of absolute necessity upon the testimony of the Fathers of the Church, to whom an appeal is thought indispensable, in order to know what to regard as the baptismal practice of the Apostolic times. Two sources have thus been opened for the study of baptism—the Bible and the Fathers. It is necessary that we should decide in reference to these sources, and if we admit both, we should fix their respective value, and the use which it will be lawful for us to make of the Fathers; for we desire, in the search after truth to use nothing but legitimate materials. Now, we renounce the use of the Fathers, and do not invoke their testimony in support of our doctrine on baptism.

Our reasons for setting them aside, are: The excessive importance conceded to them in works on baptism; and the fashion of placing quotations from their writings side by side with those of the Bible, which imply that Scripture of itself is insufficient. Hence arises an uncertainty, much increased by the length and obscurity of the passages quoted from the Fathers, and which lead many either to indifference on the subject of baptism, or to imaginary views based on human authority.

Of what use is it to heap up with historical toil, all the follies which may have been uttered on the subject of baptism from Origen to the present time? What can this prove? Would an historical work, relating all the follies uttered upon the Trinity from Origen to our days, be found very conclusive against the divinity of Jesus Christ? Such a work could easily be done; but when called to decide upon such an important doctrine, all Evangelical Christians would be unanimous in appealing only to Scripture. But it is not quotations from the Fathers, but the peculiar interpretation of some passages of the Bible, which is disputed. The Fathers are only brought forward in support of foregone conclusions, in order to prop up an ill-constructed system with any accessory that

will render it plausible. We do not hesitate to declare, that, if the practice of Christian baptism in its essentials, cannot be sufficiently determined by the Bible alone, it had better be entirely discontinued. It would be better to acquiesce in regarding, with the Quakers, the baptism of water as a ceremony become impracticable, than to attempt making up for a Scriptural uncertainty by the traditions of the Fathers, and thus add to the Bible. Although we do not quote from the Fathers in favour of infant baptism, yet their testimony is entirely in favour of it. Such also is the opinion of the most competent judge of historical evidence on baptism,—WALL, who has been surnamed "the historian of baptism," having collected impartially in two volumes all the extracts which make the most distant allusion to baptism, declares that the result is entirely in favour of infant baptism. Unfortunately, great vagueness prevails as to the religious value of baptism, and it is under the cover of this misty vagueness that a great variety of opinions have arisen, which testify to the general uncertainty on this subject. The want of careful discrimination in some passages between the baptism of water and the baptism of the Holy Spirit, opens a wide range for attributing to the rite various degrees of mysterious efficacy short of baptismal regeneration, although this latter is the only true result of the confusion of the two baptisms. This vagueness and uncertainty offends many Evangelical Christians, and carries them over to Anabaptism, where they imagine they shall find perspicuity, precision, and the absence of all sacramental mysticism. But disappointment awaits them. They will find that the system rests on the outward form, but that the spiritual idea of baptism is as vague and indefinite there as elsewhere. Some of them recognise in baptism only an external mark of admission into the Church; others see in baptism a spiritual conformity to the death of Christ; others, a burial, literal, real, and material; others, a special grace conferred; others, a simple act of obedience, without the communication of any special grace; others, baptismal regeneration; and all attach to it an excessive importance, which raises the baptism of water to the level of fundamental doctrines. We have mentioned Anabaptists as

believing in baptismal regeneration. It is the culminating point towards which the whole system tends, and where it is sure to arrive sooner or later. The assertion that a man must be new-born before receiving the baptism of water, is in effect baptismal regeneration, because none should receive it unless they are also baptized by the Holy Spirit. A large division of the Anabaptists is now constituted on this very basis. These are the Campbellites, who have for their doctrinal device, that water baptism and regeneration are one and simultaneous, and that water baptism is essential to salvation. The other divisions of the sect are not quite so far advanced in theory; but in practice they have, with little exception, reached this platform, and in their opinion, a man is truly a Christian only after immersion.

There is only one Scriptural way to fix with precision the true meaning of baptism, which is to connect it with circumcision. This is what we have already done. Circumcision had a clear and precise meaning. It was the sign of an alliance concluded between the Lord and the family of a believer; an engagement on the part of the head of the house, binding both him and his to the service of the Lord; a religious promise for the future; a symbolical expression of that covenant. Now we say that baptism is this, and nothing but this. It differs from circumcision only because it relates to another covenant; but it binds to that New Covenant, in the same manner, and with the same results, as circumcision bound to the old. If baptism does not hold under the New Covenant the place which circumcision held under the old, its value becomes unknown. The New Testament not having fixed this value, baptism will be whatever you please. It will have to undergo all sorts of modifications to suit various doctrines, systems, or ecclesiastical forms. Tertullian, Socinus, Mennon, Carson, Campbell, and the Mormons, can each and all set up their views with impunity; for to their baptisms can only be opposed other theories, more or less plausible, but which are at best only probabilities, unsupported by Scriptural proof.



ERRATA.

Page 32 line 15, for "*dichaskonte*" read "*dichaskontes.*"

Page 37 line 25, for "*In is*" read "*It is.*"

Page 44 line 4, for "*his goodness*" read "*the goodness.*"

" " " 6, for "*the goodness*" read "*his goodness,*"

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